

**THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY  
GREAT LAKES ENFORCEMENT  
PLANNER  
FACT SHEET AND TALKING POINTS**



***“Click It or Ticket” This Thanksgiving Weekend  
Up to 567 National Highway Fatalities Projected  
During Busy Thanksgiving Weekend***

***Click It or Ticket- Safety Belts Save Lives***

- Safety belts are the single most effective way to protect people in vehicle crashes.
- Seventy-five percent of the passenger vehicle occupants, who were in a serious crash in 2004 and were restrained, survived the crash.
- Although national safety belt use increased to a record 82 percent in 2005 (up from 58 percent since 1994), there are still too many people who choose not to regularly wear their safety belts.
- Safety belt usage rates for the Great Lakes Region are:
  - Illinois - 86.0%
  - Indiana – 81.2%
  - Michigan – 92.9%
  - Minnesota – 82.6%
  - Ohio – 78.7%
  - Wisconsin – 73.3%
- According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), 31,693 passenger vehicle occupants died in crashes during 2004 – and more than half of those killed were NOT wearing their safety belts at the time of the crash.

***Young Males, Pickup Truck Drivers and Rural Occupants Still at Greatest Risk***

- In 2002, motor vehicle crashes were the leading cause of death for males and females from 3 to 33 years old.
- Men – especially younger men – are much less likely to buckle up. In 2004, 67 percent of male drivers and 73 percent of male passengers between the ages of 18 and 34 who were killed in crashes were not wearing their safety belts.
- Teens and young adults, both males and females, between the ages of 16 and 24 are the age group least likely to wear their safety belts – dropping to a 77 percent belt use compared to 84 percent among boys and girls in the 8 to 15 age range.

- Safety belt use in the Nation's rural areas also consistently trails the national average, with pickup truck drivers among those least likely to buckle up.
- In 2005, observed safety belt use among pickup truck drivers and passengers was only 73 percent (compared to the 83 percent in passenger cars and 85 percent in vans and SUVs.)
- Even more alarming, the ejection rate for occupants of light trucks involved in fatal crashes is nearly double the rate for passenger car occupants – because pickup trucks in fatal crashes roll over twice as often as passenger cars.
- You can increase your odds of survival in a rollover crash in light trucks by nearly 80 percent if you are wearing your safety belt.
- Rural Americans face greater risk of being injured or killed in a traffic crash than those who live and commute in urban areas.
- Only 21 percent of Americans live in rural areas of this country, but rural traffic crashes account for nearly two-thirds of the Nation's passenger vehicle occupant fatalities and more than three-fourths of pickup truck occupant fatalities.
- Rural crashes often happen in isolated areas, sometimes causing a delay in the time of discovery and in emergency response.
- Excessive speed, alcohol-use, low safety belt use, vehicle rollovers and high occupant ejection rates also contribute to the high fatality rates in rural areas.
- That is why Federal, State and local law enforcement and highway safety partners in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio and Wisconsin are joining together as they launch an aggressive and extended public awareness and safety belt enforcement initiative focused on the rural areas of their States. The Click It or Ticket safety belt enforcement initiative will begin on November 23 and end on November 27, 2005.

### **Children Must Be Properly Restrained, Too.**

- Parents are getting the message: 99 percent of all American infants under 1 year old are now restrained.
- Older children need to be in the appropriate restraint and properly installed for their size and age.
- Unfortunately, 8 out of 10 child restraints are improperly installed.
- One study showed that children who are moved from child safety seats to regular vehicle safety belts too early are four times more likely to sustain a serious head injury in a crash than those restrained in child safety seats or booster seats. The easiest way to remember is “if they are under 4’9”, they need to be in a booster seat.”
- For maximum child passenger safety, parents, grandparents and caregivers should always remember and follow ‘*The 4 Steps for Kids*’:

1. Use rear-facing infant seats in the back seat from birth to at least 1 year of age and until they weigh at least 20 pounds;
2. Use forward-facing toddler seats in the back seat from age 1 and at least 20 pounds to about age 4 and 40 pounds;
3. Use booster seats in the back seat from about age 4 to at least age 8, unless the child is 4' 9" tall.
4. Use safety belts at age 8 and older or taller than 4'9". ALL children age 12 and under should ride in the back seat.

### **“Click It or Ticket”**

- Many part-time safety belt users say they forget to wear their safety belts on shorter trips or when traveling close to home.
- Yet, traffic crashes can and do happen anywhere at any time –on your way to work, when driving your kids to school or when close to home.
- During the holidays, long trips far from home can be even more deadly.
- That is why law enforcement officials will be out in force this Thanksgiving weekend showing zero tolerance for those not buckled up.
- This is not about writing more tickets. It is about saving more lives.
- This Thanksgiving weekend, unless you want to risk a ticket – or worse, your life – always remember to “*Click It or Ticket*.”

### **Operation C.A.R.E.**

- Operation C.A.R.E. was launched in 1977 by the Michigan and Indiana State Police as a multi-jurisdictional program of patrol, enforcement and planning activities committed to the goal of crash reduction.
- Since 1977, State Law Enforcement Agencies from the 50 states have joined in a combined effort to reduce highway injuries and fatalities caused by failure to use safety belts and child restraint systems, impaired driving and speed.
- Operation C.A.R.E. strives to accomplish its objectives through the high visibility of patrols on designated C.A.R.E. highways during holiday periods

###